

Sarvajna. Aphoristic writing seems to have developed in the three oldest of the Dravidian languages at some stage in the course of their history. Tamil literature has the verses of the *Kural* and of Awaiyar and Telugu has the aphorisms of Vemana. Sarvajna is the representative of this tradition in Kannada.

Sarvajna's aphorisms are all put into a verse form, of three lines. This like most verse in Kannada can be sung. The people, in fact, knew the aphorisms nearly always as sung and rarely by mere reading. Sarvajna appears to have been a religious mendicant of the Virasaiva faith. In all likelihood, he made the pieces as the days' incidents suggested thought and evoked feeling. It is possible also that he went about singing his own pieces. The words in these aphorisms are always simple. The structure of the verse is -equally simple but shows great skill in composition. Common words are used to express very difficult ideas and are invariably successful. This Sarvajna achieves by giving them a setting of other words equally simple. He, as it were, puts together four simple words and makes a 'star'. It was this felicity of expression combined with the profundity of the wisdom behind that brought popularity to his verse. This teacher was the popular embodiment of the culture which developed in the Karnatak country during three or four centuries. The aphorisms attributed to him are in thousands. Some of them are no

doubt spurious, but
the larger number show traces of a
genius that could
be found perhaps in only one man.
His work has
influenced later generations as only
the best type of
poetry in any country can. Its
apparent simplicity